

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Sept. 20, 2010

CONTACT: Sophia Hines, MDCH
(517) 335-6965
Jessica Shaffer, MDCH
(517) 241-0270
Mary Teachout, MDE
(517) 335-1730

Michigan-Developed Health Education Program Receives National Recognition

Lansing - Michigan's K-12 health education curriculum is an effective program for promoting mental health and preventing drug abuse and violence among youth, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The recent groundbreaking scientific study cited by the federal agency showed that the Michigan Model for Health, a comprehensive health education curriculum developed by the Michigan Department of Community Health and Department of Education, can positively impact multiple health issues before children reach middle school.

The findings stem from a two-year, randomized control study conducted during the 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 school years. The largest of its kind, this study involved more than 2,500 students followed through grades four and five, 321 teachers, and 52 schools in Michigan and Indiana. It evaluated the impact of the *Michigan Model for Health*® (referred to as the *Michigan Model*), on multiple health issues including aggression, drug use, and social and emotional health.

"We are very pleased with the results of this latest study," said Janet Olszewski, Director of the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH). "Furthermore, we now have evidence that the curriculum can contribute to the prevention of multiple unhealthy behaviors among some students. This study supports the important role that comprehensive health education plays in helping our youth adopt and maintain healthy behaviors, and eventually become healthy adults."

Parents may find it difficult to believe that fourth and fifth graders drink or use tobacco products. However, this newly released study of students in Michigan and Indiana shows otherwise. One in 10 fourth graders reported drinking more than a few sips of alcohol in their lifetime, and one in 20 reported drinking in the past 30 days. In addition, one in 20 of the students reported ever using tobacco in their lifetime and 2.8 percent reported recent tobacco use.

The lead researchers of the study, Dr. Jim O'Neill of Madonna University and Dr. Jeffrey Clark of Ball State University, found that students who received the *Michigan Model* lessons were up to three times less likely to use drugs and reduced their aggressive behaviors by almost 30 percent. The study also found stronger drug refusal skills, interpersonal communication skills, and social and emotional skills among *Michigan Model* students.

-more-

The study design and outcomes met the rigorous standards used by the DHHS Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to secure placement of the *Michigan Model* on the National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices (NREPP). Currently, there are more than 175 programs in the NREPP, but the *Michigan Model* is the first comprehensive K-12 health education curriculum to make that registry. In addition, it is one of only a handful of programs in the world to promote mental health and prevent multiple problem behaviors in both elementary and middle school students.

The *Michigan Model* is a comprehensive K-12 health education curriculum that provides age-appropriate lessons targeting the most serious health challenges faced by school-aged children. These challenges include: social and emotional health; nutrition and physical activity; alcohol, tobacco and other drugs; personal health and wellness; safety; and HIV. The curriculum facilitates skills-based learning through a variety of teaching and learning techniques, skill development and practice, and the development of positive lifestyle behaviors in students and families. Developed in 1985, the most recent revision of the *Michigan Model* combined feedback from content experts, focus groups, and contributions from teachers based on decades of use in classrooms in Michigan and across the country.

The *Michigan Model* is supported by a joint effort between the MDCH and the Michigan Department of Education (MDE). Other state and local partners contribute to the production, distribution, and training of the curriculum. Central Michigan University's Educational Materials Center (EMC) designs, formats, and publishes the *Michigan Model*. The EMC also provides a clearinghouse for materials used with the curriculum.

Teachers are trained in the implementation of the curriculum and receive technical support from Michigan's regional network of Comprehensive School Health Coordinators throughout the state. The Michigan Model addresses federal and state health education standards and grade level content expectations, and helps students meet the Michigan Merit Curriculum guidelines for health education.

Over the past 15 years, several studies have shown the effectiveness of the *Michigan Model*. These studies, which were on a smaller scale and involved older students, showed significant declines in alcohol and other drug use, unhealthy eating, and other risky behaviors. This recent study and other research have shown the strong link between academic achievement and children's social, emotional and physical well-being.

"The results of this study make the case for comprehensive health education," said Michigan's State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Mike Flanagan. "Implementing the *Michigan Model for Health*[®] curriculum assures that Michigan students are receiving effective health instruction that teaches them how to make healthy choices now and in the future. Health education is a vital component in our quest to help our students become successful in the classroom and become healthy, productive adults."

For more information about the *Michigan Model* including evaluation results, history of the program, scope and sequence charts, partners, and ordering information, please visit www.michiganmodel.org.